

# Marine Strategy Framework Directive

## Reporting Guidance

### Article 7 – Competent Authorities

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#### Document History

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# 1. Introduction

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) establishes a comprehensive approach to protect and preserve Europe's marine environment. Under Article 7, Member States are required to designate and report their Competent Authorities responsible for implementing the Directive. Although the reporting on Competent Authorities was due in 2011, Member States may subsequently update the information and notify the European Commission (EC).

The purpose of this guidance is to support Member States in fulfilling their reporting obligation on MSFD Article 7 on Competent Authorities (CA), using the EEA e-Reporting platform Reportnet 3. The guidance explains the scope of the reporting exercise, outlines the data requirements, and provides practical step-by-step instructions for using the Reportnet 3 platform. It aims to simplify the process, enhance data quality, and ensure that reported information is properly streamlined to WISE Marine for policy and assessment purposes.

As stated in the Reporting Obligations Database (ROD) the reporting frequency of this dataflow is continuous: <https://rod.eionet.europa.eu/obligations/607>.

## 2. Update of Article 7 data

### 2.1. User accounts and access permissions

For reporting in Reportnet 3, an EU login with the same email as used for reporting is required, as well as permission to upload the national delivery. Each Member State must have a Lead reporter, which should be communicated to European Commission (ENV-MARINE-ENVIRONMENT@ec.europa.eu) in writing and to the MSFD Helpdesk ([msfd.helpdesk@eionet.europa.eu](mailto:msfd.helpdesk@eionet.europa.eu)). Lead reporters can provide access to the dataflow for other supporting reporters (roles Reporter write and Reporter read provided as options). More detailed information on how to log in the platform can be found in <https://help.reportnet.europa.eu/>.

### 2.2. General structure of the reports

MSFD Article 7 Competent Authorities' dataflow has been migrated in 2026 to Reportnet 3 e-reporting platform and is available at <https://reportnet.europa.eu/>.

A dedicated dataflow is available to Member States to perform their reporting obligations via the new platform: **"MSFD Article 7 – Competent Authorities"**.



Figure 1 Dataflow for Article 7 – Competent Authorities in Reportnet 3

The reporting is structured in the dataset schema "Art7-CompetentAuthorities".

The data schema contains 2 tables or schema classes that must be populated by Member States. The tables available are the following:

- ReporterInfo
- CompetentAuthority

### 2.3. Information to be reported

The following tables present the information to be reported in each schema class: ReporterInfo and CompetentAuthority. The tables provide guidance on how to populate each schema field, its description and the property of the field (required or optional).

Table 1 Reporter Information

Schema class	Schema field	Description	Property	Guidance
ReporterInfo	ContactName	Name of the reporter <i>(One reporter per row)</i>	Optional	Free text (max. 100 characters).
ReporterInfo	ContactMail	Email of the reporter or functional email of the organisation <i>(One email per row)</i>	Required	Enter the corresponding email address (max. 256 characters).
ReporterInfo	ContactOrganisation	Name of the reporter's organisation and address <i>(One per row)</i>	Required	Free text (max. 500 characters).

Table 2 Competent Authorities

Schema class	Schema field	Description	Property	Guidance
Competent Authority	MSCA_Code	Code of the competent authority	Required	Unique EU code for the Competent Authority (CA), created by taking the two-letter ISO Country code followed by the Member State Competent Authority's unique identification. For country code use ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 country code, except for Greece ('EL'). Example: ELMSCA1. (max. 100 characters)
Competent Authority	CompetentAuthorityName	Official name of the authority in English	Required	Free text (max. 100 characters)
Competent Authority	CompetentAuthorityNameNL	Official name of the authority in the national language	Optional	Free text (max. 100 characters)
Competent Authority	Acronym	Short abbreviation (acronym) of the authority's name	Optional	Free text (max. 100 characters)
Competent Authority	Street	Street address of the authority	Required	Free text (max. 100 characters)
Competent Authority	City	City of the authority in English	Required	Free text (max. 100 characters)

Schema class	Schema field	Description	Property	Guidance
Competent Authority	CityNL	City of the authority in the national language	Optional	Free text (max. 100 characters)
Competent Authority	Country	Country of the authority in English	Required	Free text (max. 100 characters)
Competent Authority	Postcode	Postal code of the authority's address	Required	Free text (max. 50 characters)
Competent Authority	URL_CA	Official website of the authority	Required	Enter the URL web link (URL data type field with max. 2100 characters).
Competent Authority	LegalStatus	Summary of legal status (in English)	Required	Summary text of the legal status of each CA. This should include a brief description of the legal status of the competent authority, or authorities. Free text (max 4000 characters)
Competent Authority	Responsibilities	Summary of legal and administrative responsibilities	Required	Summary text of the institutional responsibilities of the CA with a brief description of the legal and administrative responsibilities of the competent authority or authorities and of its role in relation to the marine waters concerned. Where several CA are designated, state clearly the particular responsibility of each, such as their geographical remit and/or responsibilities for particular aspects of the Directive. Free text (max 4000 characters)
Competent Authority	Reference	Hyperlink or citation of legal founding document	Required	Hyperlink (or reference) to statute, founding treaty or equivalent legal document. Free text (max 4000 characters)
Competent Authority	Membership	Institutional relationships and memberships	Required	Summary text of the institutional membership, when the competent authority or authorities acts as a coordinating body for other component authorities, a list of these is required together with a summary of the institutional relationships established in order to ensure coordination. Free text (max 4000 characters)
Competent Authority	RegionalCoordination	Coordination mechanisms with other Member States	Required	Summary text for regional or sub-regional coordination with a summary of the mechanisms established in order to ensure coordination between Member States whose marine waters fall within the same marine region or sub-region. Free text (max 4000 characters)

## 3. Reporting process step-by-step

### 3.1. Step 1: Log in to Reportnet 3

The Reportnet 3 reporting platform (Figure 2) is found here: <https://reportnet.europa.eu/>.

In a first step, and before logging in, an EU login is needed. If the reporter does not have an EU login, please follow the instructions provided at the links below:

[https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet/docs/prod/howto\\_login\\_reportnet3](https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet/docs/prod/howto_login_reportnet3)

<https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet/docs/prod/mfa-for-eu-login.pdf>

Login and common functions of Reportnet 3 are described in a common guidance available at:

[https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet/docs/prod/reporter\\_howto\\_reportnet3](https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet/docs/prod/reporter_howto_reportnet3).

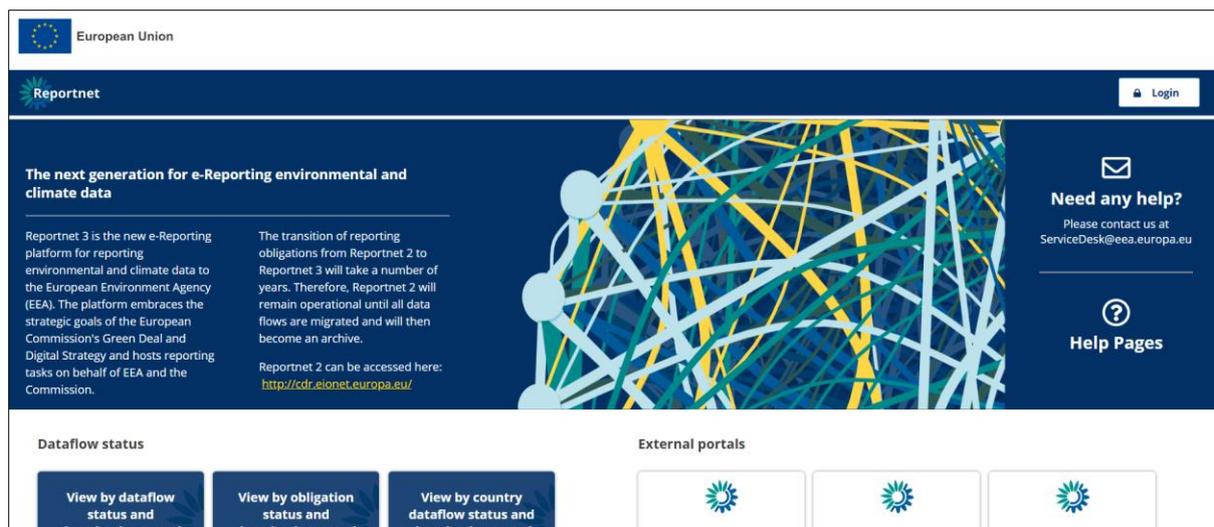


Figure 2 Reportnet 3 – Login page

### 3.2. Step 2: Open the Article 7 dataflow

#### 3.2.1. Selecting MSFD Article 7 - Competent Authorities dataflow

Once the reporter is logged in, the reporter will see all dataflows to which one can contribute to. Choose the Article 7 dataflow (Figure 3). By clicking on it, one will reach the dataflow overview page. Each reporter will see only their own country data.

Using the following direct link to the dataflows is possible as well:

<https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflows>.



Figure 3 Selecting MSFD Article 7 - Competent Authorities dataflow

**Note:** The picture shows “Role: CUSTODIAN” (applicable for EEA and ETC staff); national reporters will have a different role (e.g. “LEAD REPORTER”).

### 3.2.2. Overview of dataflow page

After selecting the relevant MSFD Article 7 - Competent Authorities dataflow, the dataflow overview page opens. It provides the most relevant functions to delivering data reports (see Figure 4).

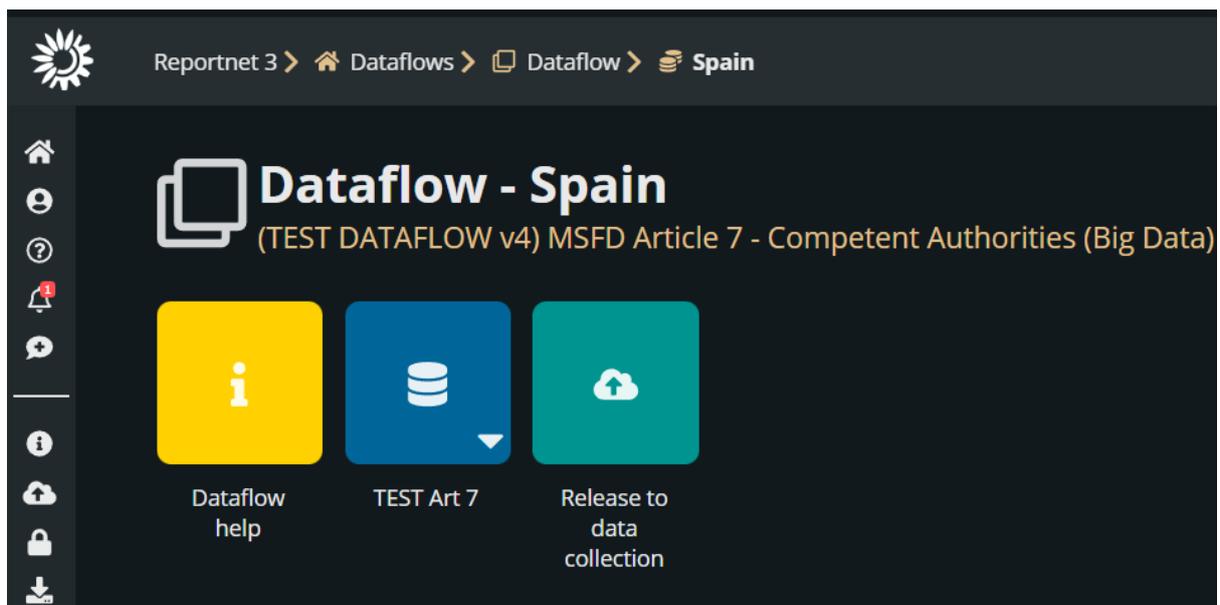


Figure 4 Dataflow overview (example: Spain)

### 3.2.3. Information available from the dataflow page

This section describes the content of the three main blocks (functionalities):

- 1) **Dataflow help**
- 2) **Art 7 - Reporting**
- 3) **Release to data collection.**

### 3.2.3.1. Dataflow help

In Dataflow help, one will find the following information provided:

- i) **Supporting documents** (Figure 5): In this tab the reporter will find all the necessary support documentation to deliver Article 7 – Competent Authorities data through Reportnet 3.
- ii) **Web links** (Figure 6): relevant links to more information, for example the Central Data Repository (CDR) help page (<https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/>).
- iii) **Dataset schemas** (Figure 7): This tab provides information on tables and fields, the list of relevant quality control (QC) rules, specifications of the fields that together form unique keys for each table, and details on external integrations.

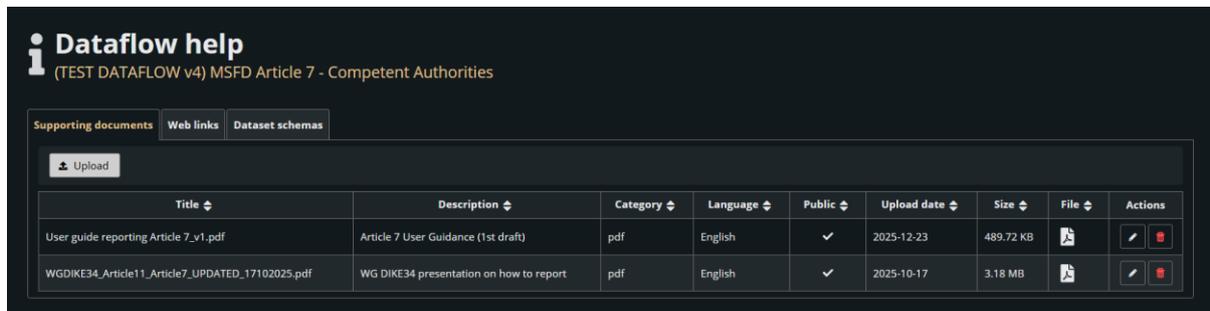


Figure 5 Dataflow help page – Supporting documents

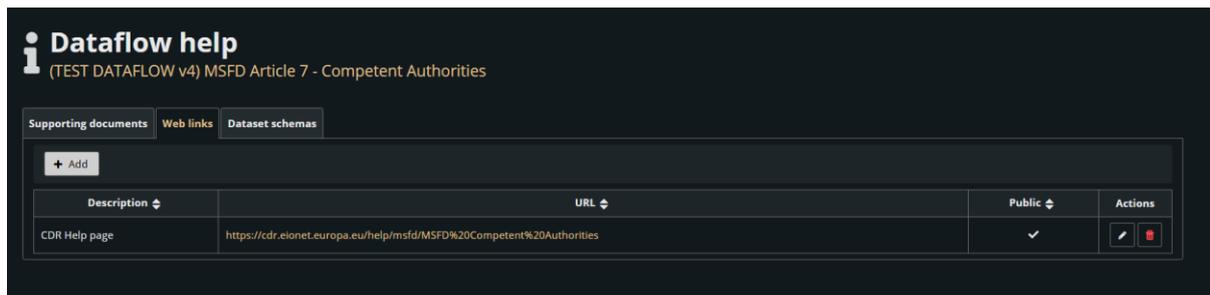


Figure 6 Dataflow help page – Web links

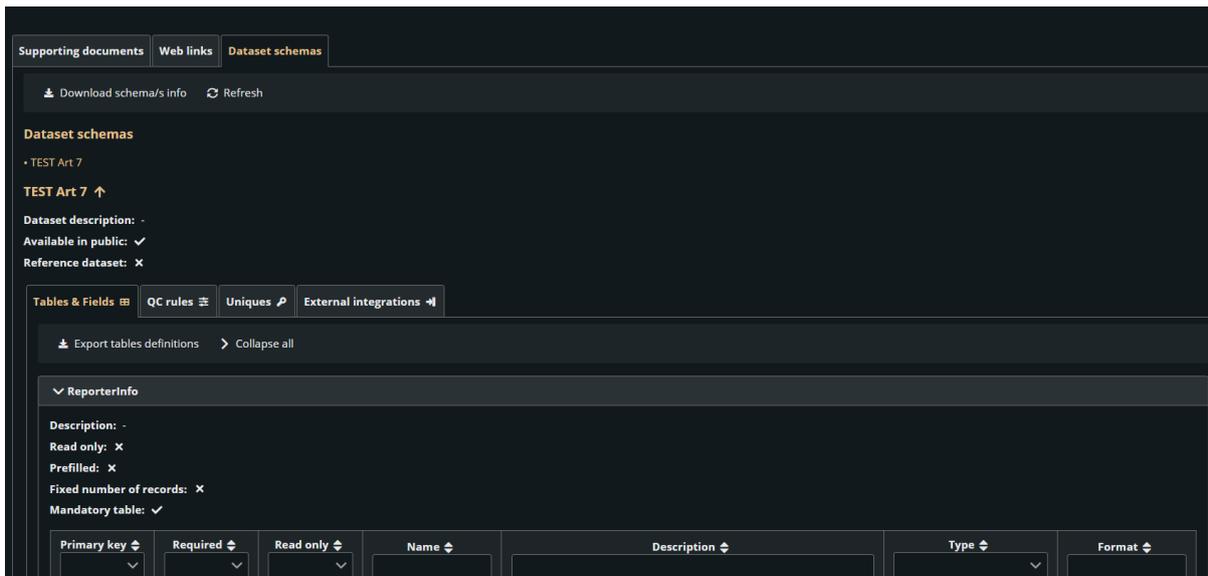


Figure 7 Dataflow help page – Dataset schemas

### 3.2.3.2. Art 7 - Reporting

Here one can upload and validate the data to be reported. Detailed information provided in Sections 3.3 to 3.6.

### 3.2.3.3. Release to data collection

Here the reporter can submit (“release”) the data, after it have been uploaded and validated. Please see Section 3.7 for detailed information on this procedure.

## 3.3. Step 3: Reporting data

To report, select “Art 7 – Reporting” on the dataflow overview page to access the data reporting section. When accessing the data reporting page for the first time, you will see two tables available for reporting, both of which will be empty initially: “ReporterInfo” and “CompetentAuthority”.

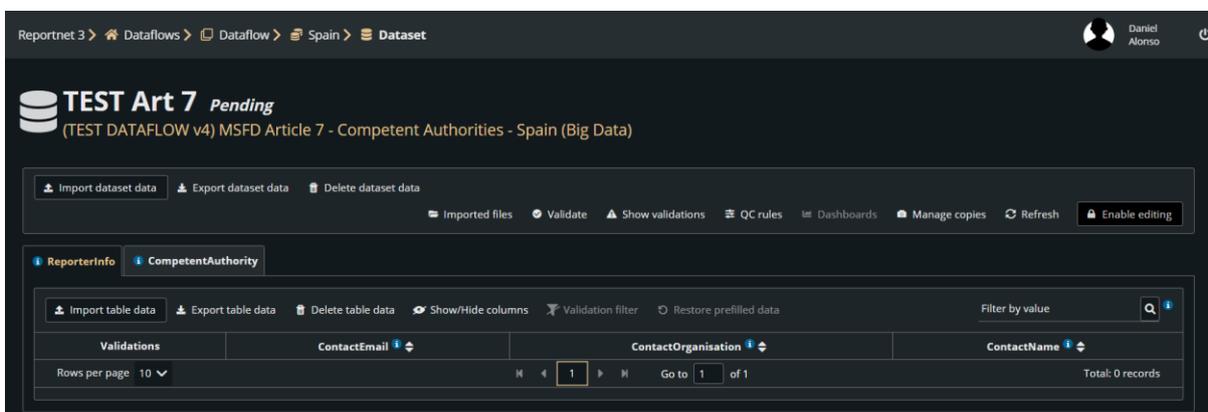


Figure 8 Reporting data page (example: Spain).

### 3.4. Step 4: Import previously reported data (prefilling)

For quicker and more effective reporting, first check if data has already been reported on the previous CDR platform (<https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/>). To do this, select **“Import dataset data”** and then click on **“Prefilling”**.

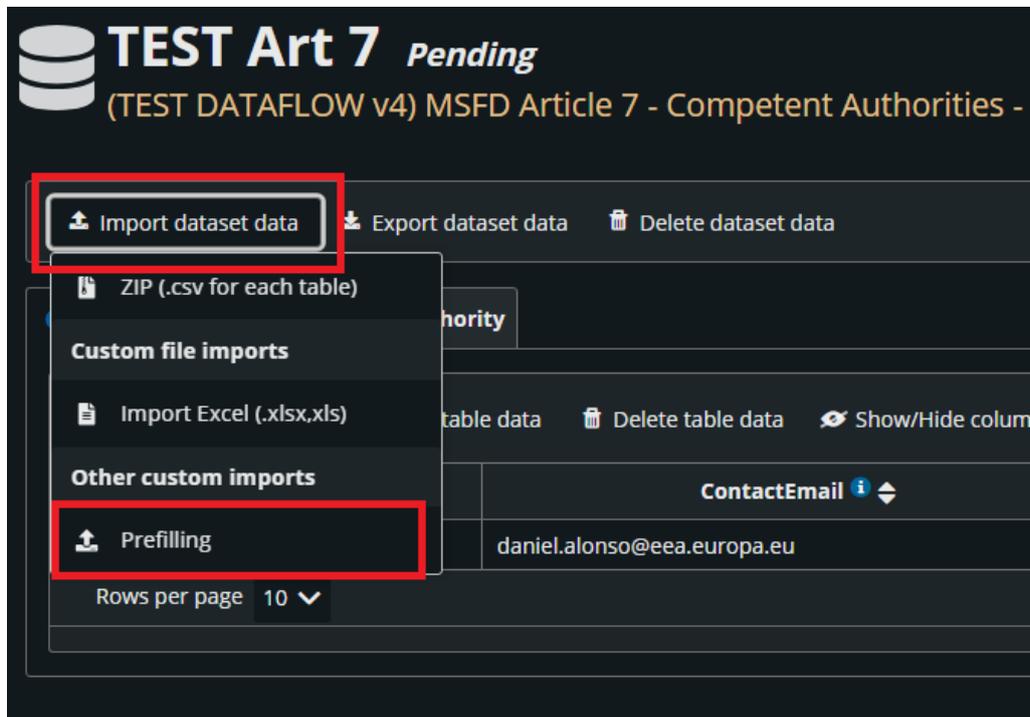


Figure 9 Prefilling import

If prefilling is available, the previously reported data will appear on the table after clicking **“Refresh”**.

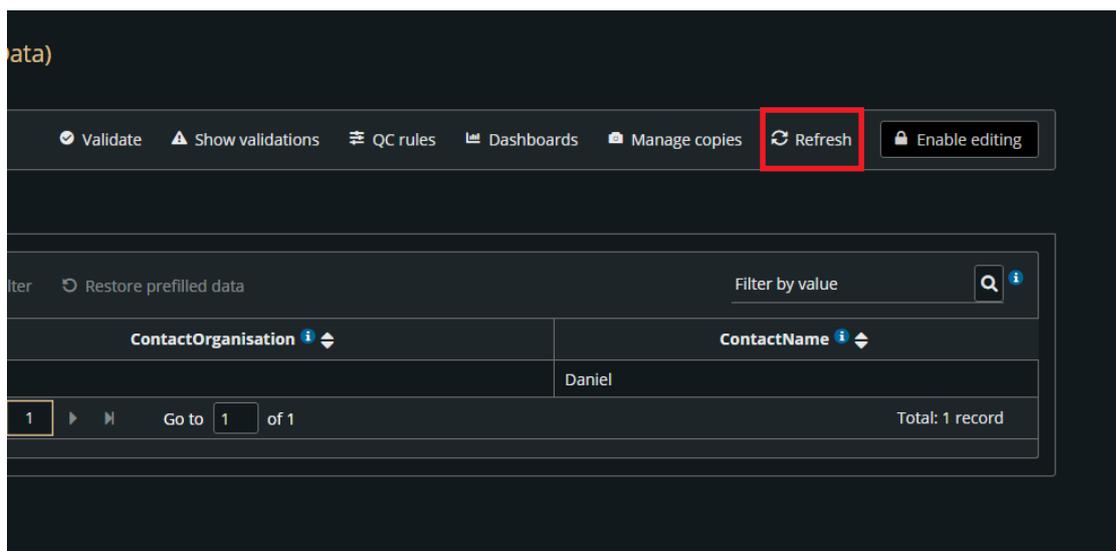


Figure 10 Refresh button location

Reporters are asked to check and, if necessary, supplement or correct the pre-filled information.

### 3.5. Step 5: Reporting new data

New data can be reported through two methods: uploading a CSV or Excel file or entering data directly within Reportnet 3 tool. For datasets containing more than a few rows, submitting an Excel file is recommended. The procedure is as follows:

- CSV/Excel file:** Go to **“Import dataset data”** and select the preferred format (CSV or Excel). The reporter may drag and drop the file or select it manually. Ensure that the headers and structure of the file match exactly those displayed in Reportnet 3; otherwise, the import will fail. One may import both tables (ReporterInfo and Competent Authorities) from the same Excel file. Alternatively, use **“Import table data”** to import a single table (**CSV format only**).

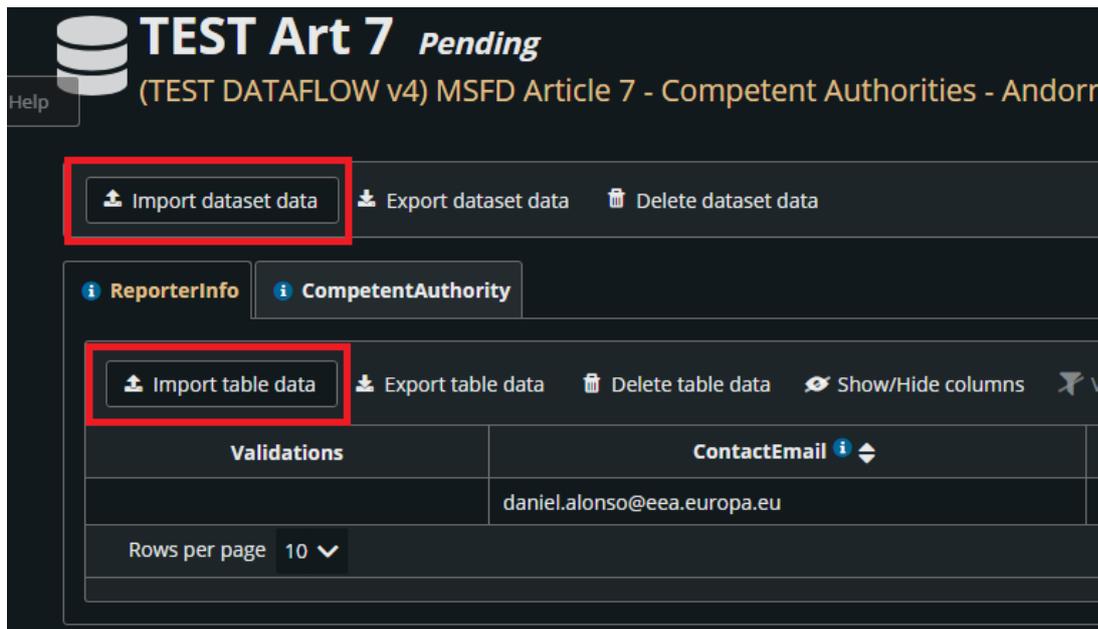


Figure 11 Import dataset and table data

- Directly on Reportnet 3:** First one needs to click on **“Enable editing”**.

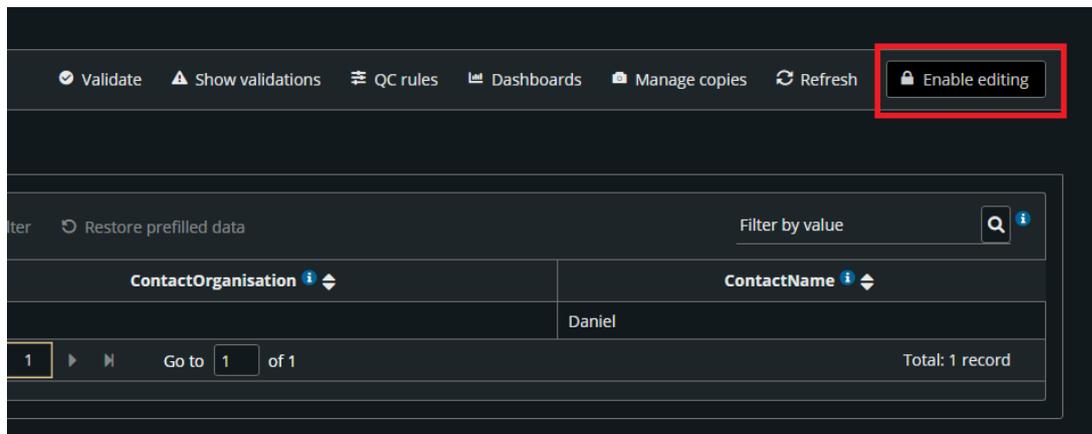


Figure 12 Enable editing

Once the editing is enabled, the reporter will have a new option called **“Add new record”** clicking it will allow to fill the table fields.

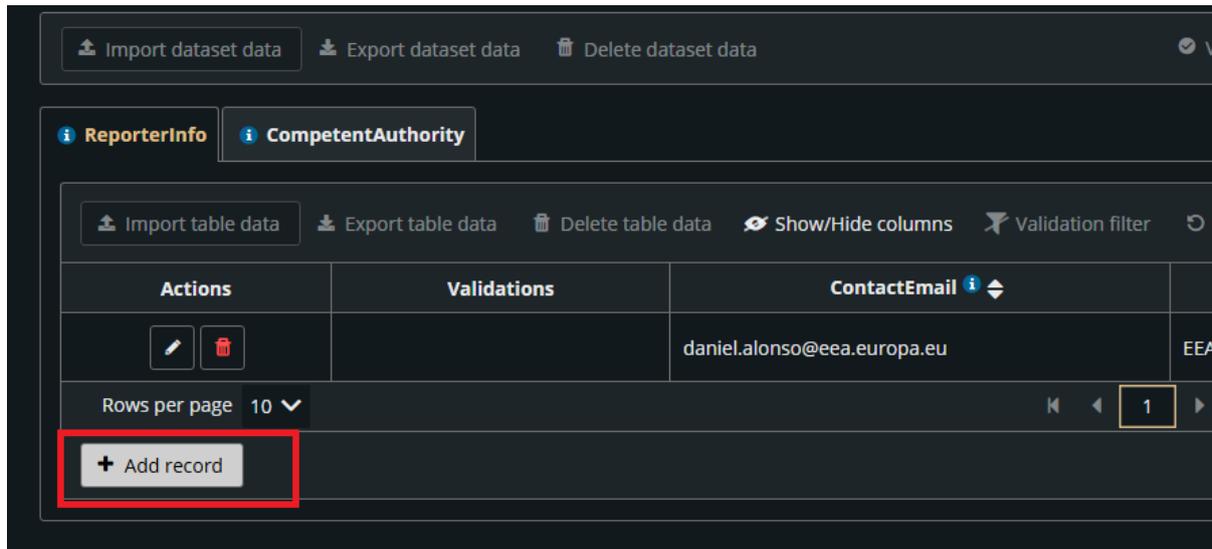


Figure 13 Add record

Once finished, click **“Disable editing”** to finish the process.

### 3.6. Step 6: Run validations

Once the data is imported, a validation must be run to check that the dataset complied with all the QC tests defined for Article 7. For validating the entire dataset, click on the button **“Validate”** shown in Figure 14.

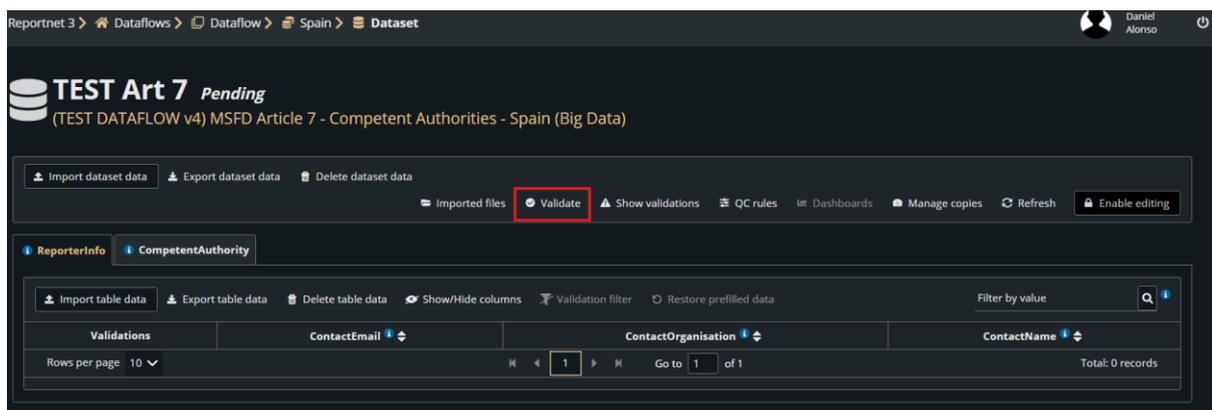


Figure 14 Validation of imported data

A confirmation pop-up window will be displayed to initiate the validation process. Please be aware that the duration of the validation may vary depending on the overall reporting activity within Reportnet 3. Additionally, reporters are unable to interrupt or terminate a validation once it has started.

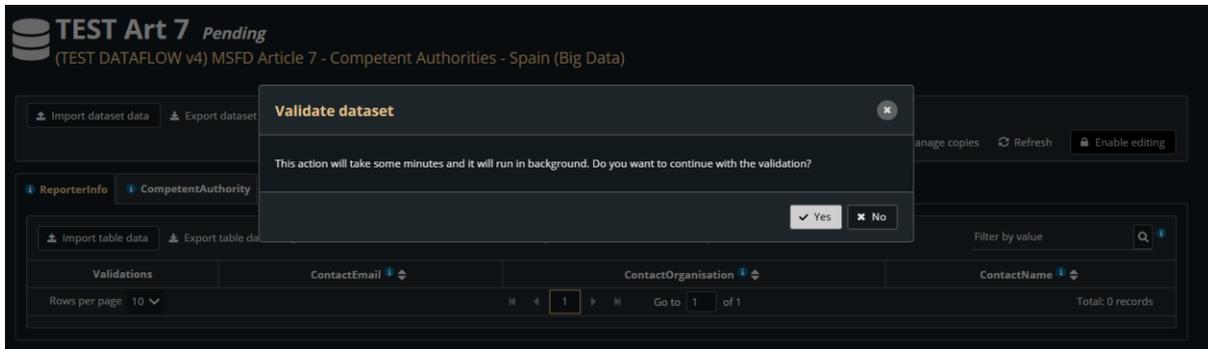


Figure 15 Confirm to continue validation of the dataset

The ongoing validation is indicated by a circling symbol and the text “Validation in progress” (in pale font) (Figure 16). A notification in the top right will indicate that validation process has started and when it has been completed.

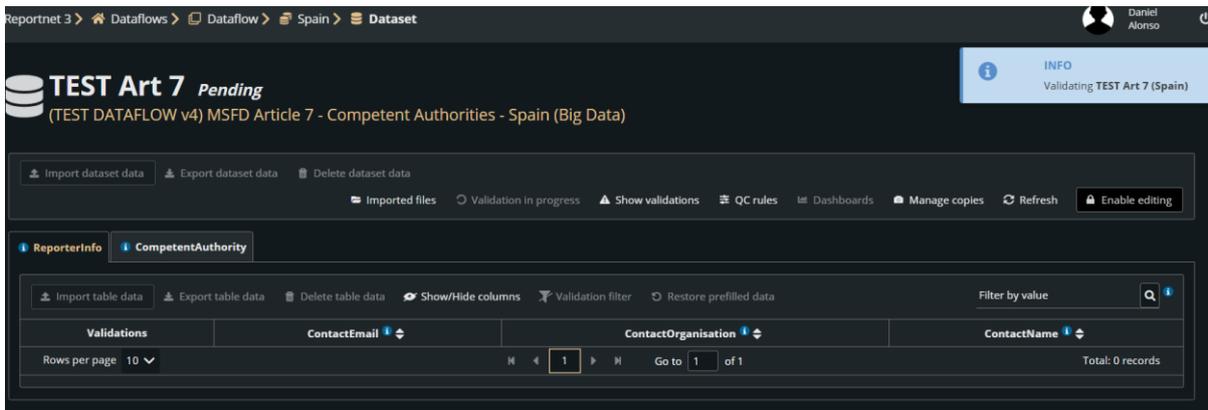


Figure 16 Validation of dataset in progress.

When the validation is completed, it is necessary to “Refresh” the table in order to see the validation results. Select “**Show validations**” to get an overview of the validation messages.

The progress of the different steps can also be tracked in the Notifications overview on the left hand side pane (“bell” symbol).

Message	Level	Date	Action
Validation finished at TEST Art 7 (Spain). Click <b>Refresh</b> to view the data.	SUCCESS	2026-01-09 10:45:56	<a href="https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1664/dataset/954877?tab=68f09eef9afc3300019c9f54">https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1664/dataset/954877?tab=68f09eef9afc3300019c9f54</a>
Validating <b>TEST Art 7 (Spain)</b>	INFO	2026-01-09 10:44:13	<a href="https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1664/dataset/954877?tab=68f09eef9afc3300019c9f54">https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1664/dataset/954877?tab=68f09eef9afc3300019c9f54</a>
You have received a message for dataflow MSFD Articles 8, 9 and 10 - Data - Reporting year 2024	INFO	2026-01-07 14:54:12	<a href="https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1224">https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1224</a>
ART9_GES changed to Technically accepted	SUCCESS	2026-01-07 14:54:12	<a href="https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1224/dataset/70846">https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1224/dataset/70846</a>
ART18 changed to Technically accepted	SUCCESS	2026-01-07 14:11:39	<a href="https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1380/dataset/75868">https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1380/dataset/75868</a>
You have received a message for dataflow MSFD Article 18 - Progress on implementation of programmes of measures	INFO	2026-01-07 14:11:39	<a href="https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1380">https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1380</a>
You have received a message for dataflow MSFD Article 18 - Progress on implementation of programmes of measures	INFO	2026-01-07 11:09:45	<a href="https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1380">https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1380</a>
ART18 changed to Correction requested	SUCCESS	2026-01-07 09:25:31	<a href="https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1380/dataset/75868">https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1380/dataset/75868</a>
You have received a message for dataflow MSFD Article 18 - Progress on implementation of programmes of measures	INFO	2026-01-07 09:25:31	<a href="https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1380">https://reportnet.europa.eu/dataflow/1380</a>

Rows per page 10 | 1 | Go to 1 of 1 | Total: 9

Close

Figure 17 Notifications table

The next action for the reporter is to inspect all validation results, in order to understand errors and revise the data if necessary.

To get an overview of all validation results - Click on “**Show validations**” button (dataset menu) to open a table where all QC results in the dataset are listed. The validation results can also be exported as an Excel file (“**Download validations**” button).

Entity	Table	Field	Code	Level error	Message	Number of records
TABLE	ReporterInfo		Q0001	BLOCKER	Mandatory table has no records	1
TABLE	CompetentAuthority	MSCACode	Q0045	BLOCKER	Uniqueness and multiplicity constraints - The field Auth_CD is unique within table	4

Short code | Type of QC | Table | Field | Level error | Filter | Reset

Rows per page 10 | 1 | Go to 1 of 1 | Total: 4 records (total errors: 5)

Download validations | Close

Figure 18 ‘Show validations’ – overview of validation results

In that table (Figure 18), the reporter will find the following fields (columns):

- Column ‘Entity’ – specifies the related entity for the QC failure. It could be on the level of a single FIELD, a RECORD, an entire TABLE or the whole DATASET.
- Column ‘Table’ – names the table with the error message.
- Column ‘Field’ – name of the field containing error.
- Column ‘Code’ – identification of the error code in the list of errors.
- Column ‘Level error’ – describes the level of error message. In the event of a QC test failure, the data are flagged according to the following levels:
  - **INFO** – information that data (attributes) which are not defined as mandatory are missing. The data set is still deliverable.
  - **WARNING** – information that value is outside of the expected range. The data set is still deliverable.
  - **ERROR** – information that shows there may be a real error. The data set is still deliverable, but the error should be evaluated by the EEA or ETC expert.
  - **BLOCKER** – information that a mandatory information is missing. The data set cannot be delivered. BLOCKER needs to be fixed first before the data can be released. **Only BLOCKERS will stop the data from being released to the data collection.** Note, however that, as part of the feedback process, the EEA/ETC may request changes also where non-blocking QC issues have been flagged.
- Column ‘Message’ – description of the specific error.
- Column ‘Number of records’ – specifies the number of affected records.

The button ‘QC rules’ (dataset menu) shows a list of all validations which have been created for the Article 7 – Competent Authorities dataset and the level of error message they cause (Figure 19).

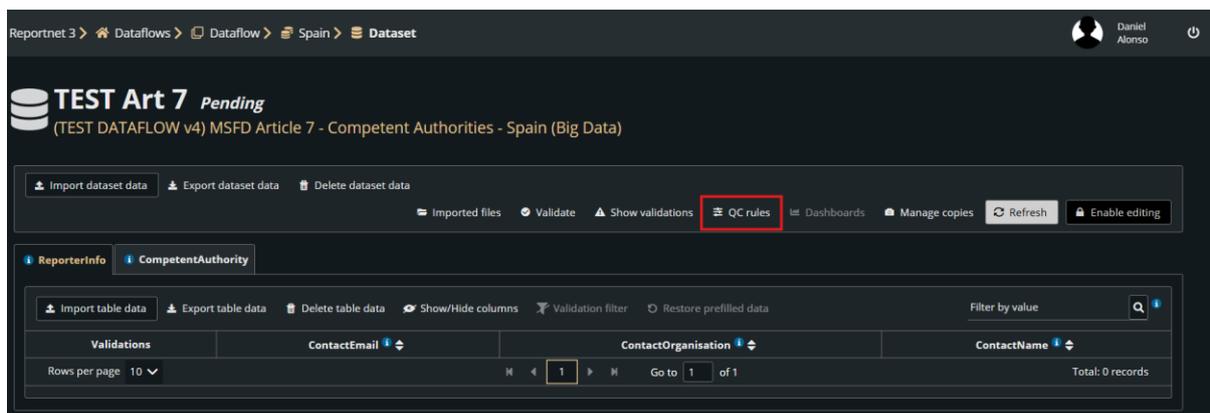


Figure 19 Button QC rules and list of Article 7 – Competent Authorities QC rules in Reportnet 3.

The column ‘Validations’ in each data table shows, for each record, which level of errors at field and record level occurred. Field level errors have icons next to the value (attribute) in the field. Hover over it to see the error message. It is also possible to filter records in the validation table to make it easier to work with. One can filter on the error messages either by the error level or the entity type. Double-click on an error in the list to go to the record in the table and it will be highlighted.

The ‘Dashboards’ (dataset menu) gives a visual overview of the number of errors in the data by table.

**Correct the data:** It is possible to make corrections to the data tables directly in the records imported in Reportnet 3, by selecting the pen icon in the “Actions” column (Figure 20). This interactive tool can be useful for checking that a correction works.

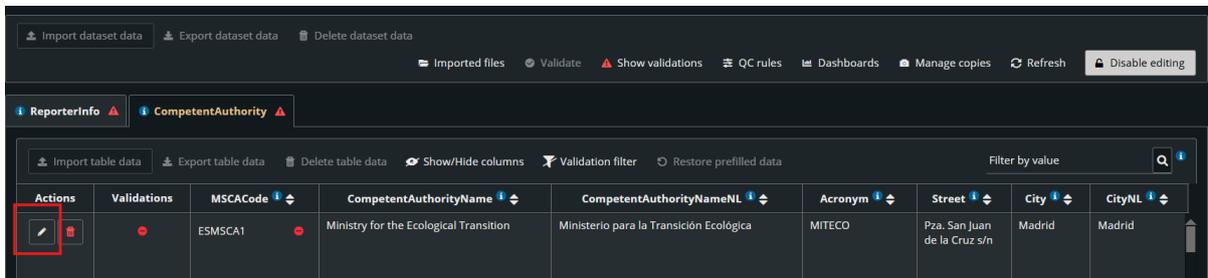


Figure 20 Tool for direct interactive correction of the data (pen icon).

### 3.7. Step 7: Release to data collection

Once the reporter is satisfied with the uploaded data, and there are no errors and blockers in the dataset, the delivery is completed by releasing it to the data collection.

First, go back to the Article 7 – Competent Authorities Dataflow overview page (Figure 21). Click on the button **Release to data collection**. In the background, QC runs again on each dataset and the “Show validations” list in the dataset will be refreshed.

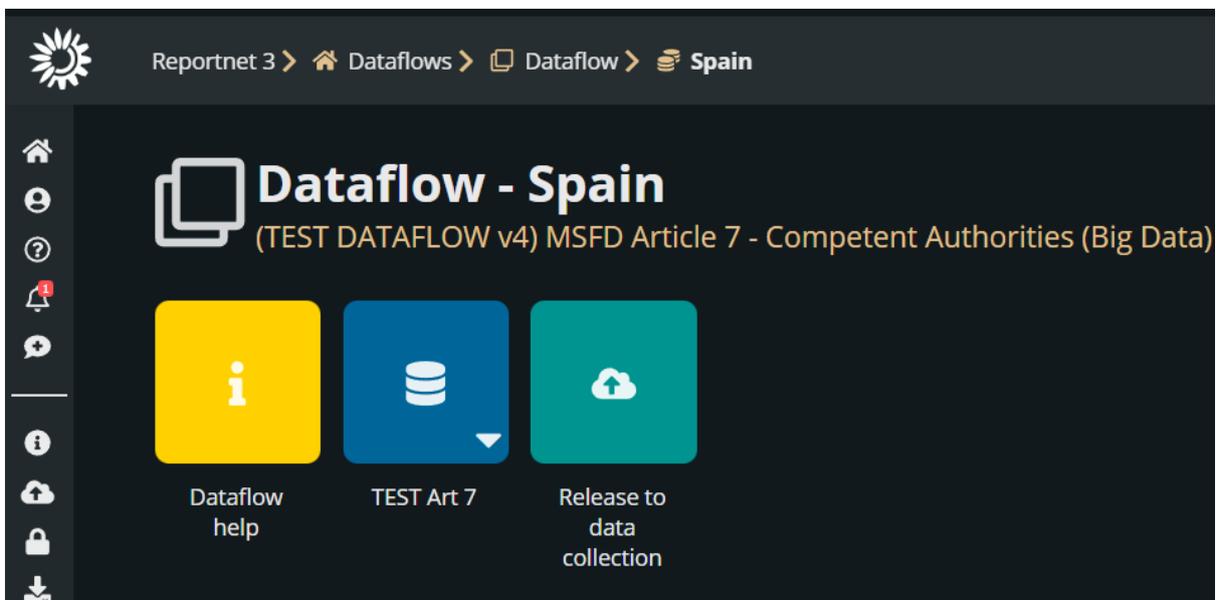


Figure 21 Release to data collection (example: Spain)

A pop-up message will appear, and the reporter should confirm that all datasets will be released to the data collection (Figure 22).

There is an option to restrict the dataset from public view by selecting the relevant checkbox. However, as MSFD data is intended to be publicly accessible, this option should remain unchecked.

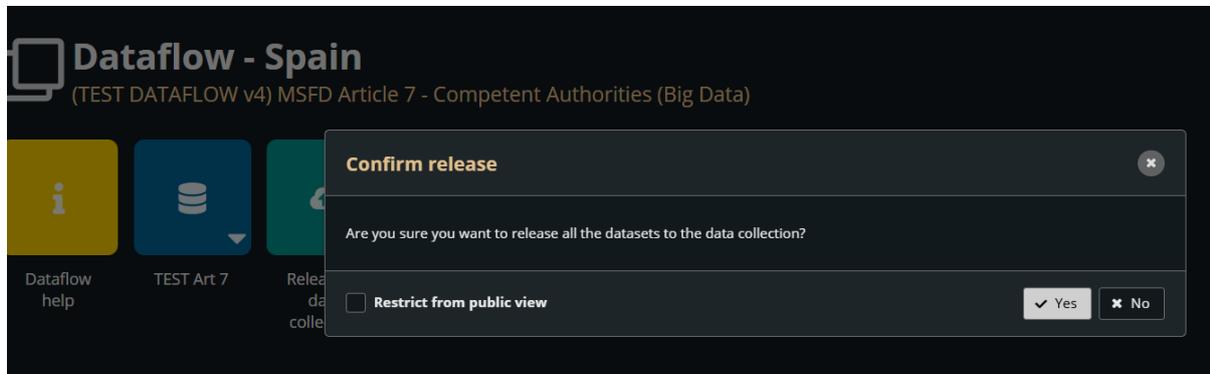


Figure 22 Confirm release of all the datasets

If any dataset contains blockers, the release process will be stopped, and a notification will be issued regarding the issue. Upon successful completion of the QC run, a message will confirm that the data has been "released successfully." An automated copy of the data will then be generated.

A new block, “**Technical feedback**” (Figure 23), will then appear on the Dataflow overview page. In this feature the data steward will communicate with the reporter and provide a technical evaluation of the data submitted. Whilst awaiting review, the delivery status is “**Final feedback**”.

All dataflows have a technical acceptance phase following the national data submission. During the technical acceptance phase, the results of the automatic validation will be reviewed, and the national data submission will be assessed, which will result in a status of “**technically accepted**” or “**correction requested**”. This information will be provided in the “Technical feedback” functionality.

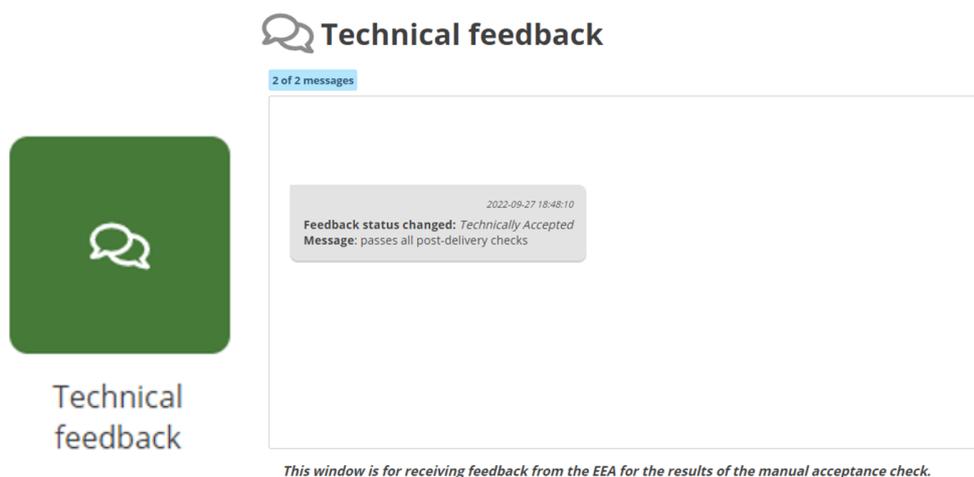


Figure 23 Technical feedback

If the delivery is flagged as “**Correction requested**” due to incompleteness or errors found in the datasets, the reporter will be contacted by the MSFD helpdesk, via “Technical feedback”, and asked for clarifications. In such case, inconsistencies in the data will have to be corrected by the reporter and submitted under a new release to the data collection. When the EEA has “**Technically accepted**” the delivery, no further actions are necessary on the reporter’s side.

The reporter can also download a “**Confirmation receipt**” (see Figure 24). Additionally, the Block “Art 7 - Reporting” will display a checkmark symbol.

If the reporter updates the data and submits a revised version to the data collection, a new confirmation receipt will be generated and available for download. This receipt should be used for the notification of reporting to the European Commission.



Figure 24 Confirmation receipt of the data delivery

To look at the reporter’s submission history, on the dropdown menu for the Reporting data, one will find “**Historic releases**” which opens a dialogue showing the releases metadata.

## 4. Additional information

Further support documentation for Reportnet 3 can be accessed via the following links:

[https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet/docs/prod/reporter\\_howto\\_reportnet3](https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet/docs/prod/reporter_howto_reportnet3)

[https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet/docs/prod/howto\\_login\\_reportnet3](https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet/docs/prod/howto_login_reportnet3)

<https://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet/docs/prod/mfa-for-eu-login.pdf>

In case of login or platform issues, please contact Reportnet 3 Helpdesk:

[servicedesk@eea.europa.eu](mailto:servicedesk@eea.europa.eu).

In case of Article 7 – Competent Authorities thematic questions, please contact the MSFD Helpdesk:

[msfd.helpdesk@eionet.europa.eu](mailto:msfd.helpdesk@eionet.europa.eu).